COMPLIANCE COMPONENT

Revised 05.09.06

DEFINITION	
Name	Usability Testing
Description	Usability testing involves observing and evaluating the user experience as it relates to navigation, information architecture, design, layout, structure, and information presentation across the Web site by examining users' ability to navigate the Web site and to complete key tasks.
Rationale	Through usability testing involving actual users of the Web site (coupled with accessibility/usability checking tools), Missouri State Government can ensure their Web sites are as usable as possible.
Benefits	With usability testing, you can: • Discover new potential audiences for the Web site; • Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Web site; • Understand how your customers really use the Web site; • Discover how to improve the navigation on the Web site; • Choose the right online strategy and target your customers; • Develop the best navigation and content grouping for the Web site; • Choose the best prototype for the next Web site redesign; • Discover the problems with the Web site that drive customers away; • Improve customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention through providing a good user experience; and • Potentially shorten development time.

ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTURE LEVELS	
Specify the Domain Name	Interface
Specify the Discipline Name	Branding
Specify the Technology Area Name	Usability Testing
Specify the Product Component Name	AIS Web Accessibility Toolbar (Internet Explorer), IE Developer Toolbar , W3C Quality Assurance Tools, and Web Developer Toolbar (Firefox).

COMPLIANCE COMPONENT TYPE	
Document the Compliance Component Type	Guidelines
Component Sub-type	

COMPLIANCE DETAIL	
State the Guideline, Standard or Legislation	This document focuses on one User-Centered Design Testing Method: Usability testing. For a complete listing of all six methods, please visit: http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/web-usability/user-centered-design.shtml to review. The other areas of user-centered design testing methods not covered are focus groups, card sorting, participatory design, questionnaires, and interviews. **Usability Testing Guidelines:** **1. Choosing your subjects** As with any market research project, the results will only be as good as the people you test. Do not test people from your own company, or friends and family. Collect a neutral audience for testing purposes. **2. Before the usability testing** As with everything in life, first impressions are vital. Each participant must be put at ease. Remember, the usability testing session is often an extremely artificial environment and, for the most beneficial and informative results, we want them to behave as if they were using the site at home or work. Provide clear instructions on how to get to the usability testing location, and if necessary meet the participants at local stations. Do not use terms such as 'usability testing' or 'market research', as these can confuse and put people on edge. Also, ensure that participants know how long the usability testing will take, and the type of tasks they will be expected to perform. After the initial greeting, there may be non-disclosure and confidentiality forms to sign. It is essential that these are written in plain English, and are as short as possible. All you want them to be is reassured that the tests are completely confidential, and be given permission to use the data generated during the test as part of the results. **3. Beginning the usability testing** Before diving into key tasks, get the user familiar with the environment. Tell them the Web site's name and URL, and ask them for initial feedback on what they would expect from the site. Make note of any terms or phrases they use - this not only demonstrates you are taking their feedback seriously, but may provide useful tips as to possible labels for key functionality or navigation. Next, let them look at the Web site they are testing. Gauge their first impressions before allowing them to familiarize themselves with the site. These few simple tasks will help convince the participant that the usability testing will not be difficult and, perhaps most importantly, that they're not the ones being tested.

4. Choosing tasks

Set tasks that are essential to the new site's success, such as:

- Buying a permit;
- Paying taxes;
- Contacting agencies;
- Verifying mushroom species; and
- Finding out what road conditions are next week.

The site was built for a reason - can your target audience do what you need them to do?

It's also a good idea to ask the user to suggest tasks. While this gives another indication of their expectations and requirements, it may suggest new functionality or priorities.

5. How to word tasks

People tend to perform more naturally if you provide them with scenarios rather than instructions. When giving them tasks, you should use phrases like “Scenario A has occurred, and you need to call the agency urgently - find the telephone number”. This is far better than “find the ‘contact us’ section of the site”.

6. Presenting tasks

Only give participants one task at a time. More than this may intimidate them, or alter their approach to the test.

If the user is required to use inputs from outside the test (e.g. an email giving them a password to the site), give them these inputs in the form they will be presented. This will provide useful feedback on all elements of the process, rather than simply the site.

7. How to behave during the usability testing

It's essential that you remember that it's the Web site that is being tested, not you or the subject. Any feedback you get is valuable - make sure the participant knows this. If they can't complete a task, make sure they know it's not their fault.

You must stay quiet and out of sight during the test. You must not alter the test results by providing clues, suggesting directions or by reacting to things they say or do. All feedback you give must be neutral. Do not start shaking your head or huffing, however tempting it might be!

The only time you should speak is to help the participant give an opinion, or to clarify a response. Given the investment made in the project, content providers often find it difficult to be quiet during tests. If your content provider wants to be present, put them in another room with an audio/video link.

8. After the usability testing

After all the tasks have been completed, gather as much information as possible. Asking for overall impressions of the site will allow you to judge whether expectations have been met, and whether the

	participant's view of the content provider or Web site has changed during the process. Always ask for suggestions - this not only demonstrates the value you place on their thoughts, but may provide insights into how the Web site can better support the user. Finally, ask the participant what they remember about the site structure and functions of the site. Clear recollection will confirm that the site is structured logically and help identify any labeling issues you may have missed. For an example of usability testing pre-test questions, participant tasks, post-test interview and post-test survey, please visit: http://www.w3.org/WAI/EO/Drafts/UCD/questions
Document Source Reference #	

Compliance Sources			
Name	Usability.gov	*Website*	http://usability.gov
Contact Information			
Name	WebCredible	*Website:*	http://www.webcredible.co.uk
Contact Information			

KEYWORDS	
List Keywords	Usability, accessibility, testing, validation, study, user-centered design, research, feedback, focus groups, key tasks, audience testing

COMPONENT CLASSIFICATION				
Provide the Classification	☐ *Emerging*	☒ *Current*	☐ *Twilight*	☐ *Sunset*
Sunset Date				

COMPONENT SUB-CLASSIFICATION		
Sub-Classification	Date	Additional Sub-Classification Information
☐ *Technology Watch*		
☐ *Variance*		
☐ *Conditional Use*		

Rationale for Component Classification	
Document the Rationale for Component Classification	

Migration Strategy	
Document the Migration Strategy	

Impact Position Statement			
Document the Position Statement on Impact			
CURRENT STATUS			
Provide the Current Status	☐ *In Development* ☐ *Under Review* ☒ *Approved* ☐ *Rejected*		
AUDIT TRAIL			
Creation Date	03/17/2006	*Date Approved / Rejected*	7/11/06
Reason for Rejection			
Last Date Reviewed		*Last Date Updated*	
Reason for Update			